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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: December 30, 1958

SUBJECT:

HR-M/89 901030
4/16/91

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PARTICIPANTS:

Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador
Mr. Merchant, Assistant Secretary, European Affairs

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After dinner I had the opportunity to talk at some length alone with Caccia. At the outset he assailed me in standard form on the matter of

I fended him off in standard form.

We then discussed Paragraph D of the Berlin contingency instructions. I told him of my conversation with Alphand and said that I did not see how we could hold off very long on tripartite discussion here. He agreed and said that they were speeding up their processes. He said that he would be prepared to meet tripartitely on Monday.

Caccia then went into the substance. I agreed with his conclusion that the logical end of the series of steps we envisaged was a willingness to risk general war over Berlin. He was extremely dubious that our NATO allies would face up to this. He seemed equally dubious that British public opinion could be united to accept this risk. We argued at some length. My emphasis was that the facing and acceptance of the risk in advance by those who had the power and responsibility was the most effective guarantee that the risk would not in fact materialize.

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